



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RECOVERY AMONG ENDURANCE ATHLETES

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WHAT WE DID

- Recovery is the process of getting back to top performance after stress, involving mental, physical, and social aspects.
- My dissertation explored the question, “What might it mean for an endurance athlete to be skilled at recovery?”
- To answer this question, I interviewed elite endurance athletes about what recovery means and what skills it involves.
- I also used a series of short surveys to describe how athletes employ these skills between hard workouts.

WHAT WE FOUND

- Elite endurance athletes use a wide range of strategies to achieve recovery and rely on their environment and support network to help facilitate recovery.
- They shaped their recovery using 4 key self-regulation skills:
 - Knowing your body
 - Listening to your body
 - Respecting your body
 - Learning your body over time
- Elite athletes used their recovery skills when they felt more stressed or fatigued. They applied these skills throughout the recovery period between hard workouts, not just immediately after a single workout.
- In comparison, non-elite athletes used simpler, more reactive recovery methods. They applied recovery skills mainly in response to the immediate effects of their workout, based on how tired or sore they felt.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Recovery is about more than managing the physical aspects of training (for example, using ice baths and foam rollers). It can also include **spending time with family and friends, engaging in hobbies outside of sport, or strategies to manage mental health.**
- Athletes who are more skilled at recovery apply recovery techniques **during the period between hard workouts**, not only after the workout takes place. They tailor their recovery strategies to how they feel physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- Coaches and sport organizations should recognize individual differences in recovery strategies and provide athletes with a range of options and support to facilitate recovery between hard bouts of training.

